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ABSTRACT

Each of the 1989 dropout prevention programs funded under the New York City Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) Demonstration and Replication Program was successful in meeting some of its objectives, and all of the programs were viewed as valuable by principals and teachers. The program encourages the design and implementation of collaborative projects that address specific problems that prevent students from completing high school. The evaluation of the following projects is described: (1) Project SMART, a conflict mediation program involving a collaboration between the Victim Services Agency (VSA) and four high schools; (2) Enhancing Basic Reading Skills, an after-school reading and guidance program that used a consultant to design a specialized reading program; (3) Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights: Strategies for Meeting Staff, Student, Parent, and School Needs, a three-pronged program comprising English instruction, student leadership training, and peer truancy prevention involving collaborations between the school and Brooklyn College, New York University, and the Crown Heights Collective; and (4) English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Instruction for Parents, a dual program offering language instruction for parents of Hispanic students enrolled in an AIDP reading program and offering workshops and field trips to students whose parents participated; this program did not involve collaboration with an outside agency. The following problems were encountered by more than one program: (1) stimulating parent participation; (2) late start-up due to delays; (3) availability of funds; and (4) poor design of evaluation objectives. Statistical data are presented in four tables. (FMW)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT AND DROPOUT PREVENTION (A.I.D.P.) DEMONSTRATION AND REPLICATION PROGRAM 1989

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EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT AND DROPOUT
PREVENTION (A.I.D.P.)
DEMONSTRATION AND REPLICATION PROGRAM
1989

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7/3/90

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Demonstration and Replication program was intended to encourage the design and implementation of collaborative projects that target students at risk for dropping out of school. The collaborator may be a community-based organization, another educational institution or an expert individual who offers a specialized service. The programs evaluated in this report are Project SMART, Enhancing Basic Reading Skills, Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights: Strategies for meeting Staff, Student, Parent and School Needs, and English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) Instruction for Parents.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Project SMART is a conflict mediation program that emerged from a collaboration between Victim Services Agency (V.S.A.) and four high schools. The project coordinator in each school is an employee of V.S.A. who instituted the program by conducting seminars in classrooms and at faculty and staff meetings, conducted specialized training courses in mediation for students, faculty and other staff, and offered mediation for disputes between students, students and parents, and students and teachers.

Enhancing Basic Reading Skills is an afterschool reading and guidance program that targets students whose reading scores fall in the lowest quartile. It utilized the expertise of a consultant who designed a specialized reading program that uses a multisensry phonics approach, and is pitched at older students and adults. The consultant trained teachers in the use of the program. Each student was also provided with intensive counseling services.

Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights: Strategies for Meeting Staff, Student, Parent and School Needs is a three-pronged program that emerged from collaborations with Brooklyn College, New York University and the Crown Heights Collective. It trained teachers to address the specific language deficits that occur among people who speak English with a dialect, selected students with "raw potential" and offered them leadership training, and utilizes student leaders to promote truancy prevention efforts initiated by the C.B.O.

English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) Instruction for Parents offers hispanic parents of students in an A.I.D.P. high school reading instruction, seminars in which they may learn about the New York City school system, dance and arts and crafts workshops and field trips. The workshops and field trips were available to students if their parents participated. This was not a collaborative project, since no outside agent was involved

in staff development or the delivery of services.

PROGRAM GOALS

The purpose of A.I.D.P. Demonstration and Replication grants is to fund programs that address specific problems that prevent students from completing high school. The programs funded through this grant focus on behavioral/emotional problems, deficits in basic skills and problems in the home and/or community. The objectives of each individual program are designed to assess improvement in the problems that the program addresses.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the programs was successful in meeting some of its objectives. Project SMART met its objectives in terms of the number of seminars, mediation training courses and mediation sessions it conducted, and the number of students and personnel it served. Although it met its objective of reducing suspensions by 20 percent, this objective was measured make the findings equivocal.

Enhancing Basic Reading Skills exceeded its objectives of improving reading scores and attendance, and delivering intensive guidance services to the student participants. It reached an appropriate population, but in smaller numbers than originally projected, and recruited fewer teachers than originally planned.

Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights: Strategies for Meeting Staff, Student, Parent and School Needs was implemented as planned. OREA encountered special problems in evaluating the extent to which the program met its objectives. In some cases the data were not available.

English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) Instruction for parents served fewer parents than projected, but the parents served demonstrated a level of reading improvement that met the objectives. Workshops were discontinued because of poor attendance by parents. The objective of increasing parent attendance at Parent Teacher Association meetings was not met.

Three problems that were common to more than one program were difficulties in stimulating parent participation, late start-up due to delays, availability of funds and poor design of evaluation objectives. All of the programs were viewed, by the school principals, as successful in contributing to attendance improvement and dropout prevention. In general, the contribution of the collaborator was valued by administrators and teachers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The stated purpose of the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Demonstration and Replication program is to promote and foster the design of collaborative initiatives that will improve school attendance and academic performance of high school students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. Funds for several collaborative projects were dispersed through individual superintendencies. In some cases, the program to be funded was determined by the superintendent's office, and in other cases the superintendent's office invited proposals from the high schools. This report evaluates those programs whose funding terms required that they be evaluated by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA). They are: Project "SMART;" Enhancing Basic Reading Skills; Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights: Strategies for Meeting Staff, Student, Parent and School Needs; and English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) Instruction for Parents. Table 1 lists the schools and collaborative agencies associated with each program.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

OREA evaluated the implementation of each program through extensive telephone conversations with program coordinators and principals at each school, and staff at the various agencies and institutions participating in the collaborative projects. An evaluator compiled the data needed to evaluate the extent to which each program met its objectives through telephone

Table 1

Schools and Collaborative Agencies Associated With Each Program

Program	School	Collaborative Agency
Project SMART	Graphic and Communication Arts; Humanities; Park West; Washington Irving	Victim Services Agency (V.S.A.)
Enhancing Basic Reading Skills	T. Roosevelt	Outside consultant
Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights	Prospect Heights	Brooklyn College; New York University; Crown Heights Collective
E.S.L. Instruction for Parents	Boys and Girls	None

• Some projects were designed to meet at particular schools while Project SMART was implemented at several schools.

conversations, data submitted through mail surveys, and in onecase, a site visit. Instruments were constructed to evaluate the objectives of individual programs. A single structured interview was conducted on the telephone with the principal of each school to determine how, and to what extent, each program contributed to the goals of the A.I.D.P. Demonstration and Replication program.

PROGRAM CONTEXT WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Telephone interviews with the principals provided much of the information OREA obtained about the role each program played in the overall attendance improvement and dropout prevention efforts of the individual schools. All principals characterized their schools as plagued with problems of poor attendance and high dropout rates. In addition, most characterized a large proportion of the student population as poor, and deficient in basic skills. Because of these conditions, each school is the recipient of many special programs aimed at keeping students in school and improving academic performance. Although the principals were uniformly pleased with the programs funded by the A.I.D.P. Demonstration and Replication program, they were frequently unable to make assessments of their impact independently of that of the many other programs in their schools.

In some cases, the principal was unable to say with certainty that the A.I.D.P. Replication and Demonstration program had been in the school before the 1988-89 school year. All said

that they thought not. In only two cases did the principal report any special links between this program and the existing A.I.D.P. program. Prospect Heights and Humanities High Schools do not participate in the A.I.D.P. program.

Table 2 summarizes principals' responses to questions about how the program contributed to the overall dropout prevention efforts of the school, where the initiative for instituting the program arose, who designed the program and whether they would like to see the program continue. In some cases principals reported that the program was successful at aiding attendance improvement and dropout prevention efforts, but in other cases, they said that it was successful and valuable, but did not specifically target at-risk students. The principals, in general, found programs valuable if they stimulated increased involvement of parents or increased motivation of teachers. The principal at Boys and Girls High School indicated that he would like to see the feeder schools become involved in the program.

Three problems were common to more than one program. They were delays in starting-up the program, poor success in achieving parental participation, and poor design of evaluation objectives. In most of the schools, start-up of the program was delayed because funds and contracts were not available on the originally scheduled dates. In order to avoid cash flow problems, many of the C.B.O.s delayed employment of the workers they hired to implement the programs until the paper work was in order.

Many of the proposals asserted that student problems were

Table 2

Summary of Principals' Reactions to the Program

School	Drop-out Prevention	Initiative	Designer	Continue
Graphic and Communication Arts	Keeps students in school and interested	Superintendent's Office	V.S.A.	Yes
Humanities	Retains students who would drop out	Superintendent's Office	V.S.A.	Yes
Park West	Targets all students	Superintendent's Office	V.S.A.	Yes
Washington Irving	No; contributes to problem-solving and leadership	Superintendent's Office	V.S.A.	Yes
T. Roosevelt	Targets lowest quartile in reading; curricular aid and cultivates relationship with a teacher	School	Principal Asst.Principals for English and Social Studies	Subject to evaluation
Prospect Heights	Remarkably successful for drop-out prevention and attendance improvement	School	Program Coordinator	Yes
Boys and Girls	Don't know	School	Program Coordinator	Yes

- Most principals believed that the program was effective in preventing dropouts.

due, in part, to the fact that parents were unable to offer students support, either because they did not understand their role in their children's education, or they had not established lines of communication with the school. Thus, many of the programs targeted parents of high-risk students. For the most part, programs fell short of meeting their objectives of stimulating significant parental participation.

Each of these programs was designed by either school staff or a collaborative agency. The program objectives were developed in consultation with the superintendents' offices. In no case did OREA participate in designing the objectives. In some cases, the data called for by the objectives were not valid measures of the impact of the program. In other cases, they were impractical in that they are difficult to obtain given the form in which records are kept, or they rely too heavily on the collaborative institution. Moreover, OREA was notified at a late date about the fact that the office was to be involved in the evaluation of these programs. As a consequence, the data needed to evaluate these programs were, in some instances, not available, or not sufficiently informative.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Each program is evaluated in terms of background, implementation, outcome and conclusions and recommendations. Chapter II evaluates Project Smart, and Chapter III evaluates Enhancing Basic Reading Skills. Chapter IV examines Cultural Diversity at Prospect Heights: Strategies for Meeting Staff,

Student, Parent and School Needs, while Chapter V presents evaluation information regarding the English as a Second Language: Instruction for Parents program.

II. PROJECT SMART

BACKGROUND

Project SMART is a conflict management program administered by the Victim's Services Agency (V.S.A.). It provides mediation services on an as-needed basis to students, parents and teachers. Prior to January, 1989, this program was available at eight high schools and one junior high school. The Manhattan Superintendent's Office provided the initiative for extending the program by offering it at the following four additional high schools: Bayard Rustin High School for the Humanities, High School of Graphic Communication Arts, Park West High School and Washington Irving High School. The A.I.D.P. Demonstration and Replication Program provides funding for Project SMART at these four schools. These schools are the subject of this report.

V.S.A. is a not-for-profit agency that receives most of its funding from New York State and New York City, and provides services for crime victims, and in particular battered women shelters, child victims, and victims of sexual abuse. It delivers its services through hotlines, mediation programs and crime victim offices located in courts, hospitals, precincts and communities throughout the city. V.S.A. conducts two kinds of school programs. One program, which takes place in junior high schools, educates students in an attempt to prevent their becoming victims of crime and/or abuse. The other program provides conflict management services. This latter program was initiated in Bryant High School in 1983, and is now operative in

15 high schools, including the four schools evaluated in this report. The program is also operating in one junior high school that is a feeder school to Bryant High School.

Project SMART is one attempt to meet the Chancellor's call for a "collaboration between school, business, universities and community groups ... to reconnect schooling to home family and community life." It targets "at-risk" students with unique family problems that make violence a likely method of resolving disputes. A disproportionately low number of school personnel allocated to student guidance services makes it difficult to address disputes, as they arise, in a comprehensive manner. Project SMART offers an alternative solution for resolving disputes through the use of interpersonal resources of a trained staff and student body. The program addresses disputes among students, between students and staff, and between parents and students or staff. The short-term goals of the program are to create a more harmonious climate among students, and to decrease the number of suspensions that result from violent disputes. The long-term goals are to provide a kind of staff development that allows for diversified roles for teachers, which includes opportunities to counsel students, and to provide students with interpersonal skills that will decrease the likelihood of their engaging in violent disputes in the future.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives at each school were:

- To train a minimum of 10 students and five school personnel and/or parents in the skills and techniques of

mediation and conflict resolution as measured by the number of resolutions of conflicts brought to the center. (Of this group, five students will be "at risk" with regard to academic, attendance, overage and/or discipline problems);

- Using students and adults who have completed the training, conduct a minimum of 55 mediation sessions involving 125 students experiencing problems with other students, teachers and/or parents, as measured by a detailed log listing number of sessions, participants and dates;

- To conduct a minimum of 25 classroom seminars (approximately 450 students), designed to generate school-wide interest in mediation and recruit mediators and cases;

- To conduct one advanced mediation skills training session in racial and cultural dispute resolution for five students and two staff members from each school who have completed basic mediation skills training; and

- To reduce the number of suspensions for student fighting by a minimum of 20 percent using previous year's figures as base.

The consolidated objectives for the four schools combined are to train a minimum of 40 students, to conduct a minimum of 100 classroom seminars (serving approximately 1,800 students) and to mediate a minimum of 220 disputes involving 500 students. At least 272 of these students (20 trainees and 252 disputants) will be at risk.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) conducted telephone interviews with the Deputy Director of School Mediation of the V.S.A., the program coordinators at each site and the principal at each school. Two interviews, one structured and one unstructured, were conducted with each coordinator. The quantitative data needed to determine the extent to which the

program objectives were met were collected partly through the interviews and through data collected at each program site and compiled at V.S.A. OREA also received, and evaluated copies of disputant questionnaires which were completed for all cases in which an agreement was reached.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Philosophy of Program

The philosophy underlying the use of mediation to settle disputes in school has three components. First, increasing the number of skilled mediators decentralizes the process of settling disputes, and dramatically increases the school's resources for resolving conflicts. The fact that teachers are trained and capable mediators is very important in that they can mediate conflicts in which they are personally involved, or disputes that either occur in their presence or are referred to them. Mediation offers disputants an opportunity to have a dispute settled by someone who is viewed as a neutral facilitator advocate and not part of the administration. Since staff, parents and students are trained as mediators, when a dispute is mediated, each constituent feels that someone is sensitive to the issues that trouble him/her, and understands things from his or her perspective. By its very nature, the mediation process provides a non-threatening opportunity for a disputant to understand the other person's motives.

Second, the V.S.A. staff believe that resolving conflicts through mediation can drastically reduce the number of

suspensions, and thus keep more students in school. In some cases, mediating a dispute before it escalates to violence can prevent the incident that would warrant suspension from occurring. The staff at V.S.A. believe that successful mediation (i.e., resulting in signed agreements) of violent disputes should serve as an alternative to suspension. Currently, no alternative exists that does not involve a student leaving school. The problem with suspension, according to V.S.A., is that the conflict does not get settled, the student feels angry, self-esteem is lowered and the student, once removed from school, falls further behind in classwork and becomes more alienated from the school community. They believe that it is actually more difficult to face one's disputants and abide by a contract than to simply stay home. Moreover, students feel good about themselves as a result of conflict resolution, and can direct this positive energy towards their school work.

Finally, mediation provides a means of settling a dispute that leaves the disputants with a sense of justice having been served, and constructive guidelines about how to behave in the future. The staff at V.S.A. believe that this is an important mechanism for dissipating anger and engendering a sense of autonomy.

Start-up

Since the initiative for Project SMART came from the Office of the Manhattan Superintendent rather than from the participating schools, the school administrators and staff had

little input into the design of the program and the hiring of personnel. Moreover, at the outset, they were not aware of what the program entailed. This constituted the most significant start-up problem, since the staff had to be informed about, and in some cases sold on the idea of conflict resolution through mediation. In two of the four schools, the principal stated that one or two guidance counselors were involved in writing the grant proposal that funded the project, and in the other two schools there was no involvement on the part of the school prior to the start of the program. The coordinators were hired by V.S.A. contingent upon approval by the school principal who, in each case was extremely satisfied with the candidate. In one case the principal had, in advance, requested that a minority person be hired as coordinator and his request was met.

Project SMART was initially intended to start at the beginning of January, but in fact did not begin until the end of February. The delay was, in part, intentional. Since V.S.A. did not review the contracts for administering this program until February 8, and did not receive copies to be signed until March 7, they delayed the hiring of school staff in order to avoid incurring cash flow problems.

In some cases additional delays were caused by the fact that the schools needed time to prepare offices for the program. At the High School of Graphic Communication Arts, the shortage of office space was resolved by having the coordinator work out of the dean's office. This posed many difficulties in that the

space was insufficient, the students viewed the coordinator as a member of the dean's office, and the coordinator was not provided with private space and a telephone. At Bayard Rustin High School for the Humanities there were also difficulties in finding appropriate office space. According to the program coordinator, the school wanted the program very much and moved two other people from an office in order to provide space for the program. Office supplies and all other material necessary for starting up the program were provided by V.S.A. in a timely fashion.

Program Description

Target Group. The four high schools at which Project SMART is situated are all either A.I.D.P. or A.I.D.P.-eligible*. Although the program's services are available to all students on an as-needed basis, the target group consists of ninth and tenth graders who are high risk on the basis of the following criteria:

- excessive disciplinary record,
- sporadic attendance or truancy,
- poor academic performance,
- deficiency in basic educational skills,
- at least one year overage for grade, or
- returning Long Term Absentees (L.T.A.s).

This at-risk population is identified primarily through a cooperative effort on the part of the A.I.D.P. facilitator,

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*A.I.D.P. is a state-funded program of instruction, guidance, attendance and health services for those students in New York City's public schools most at risk of dropping out of school. The program has operated in selected schools with large numbers of students with excessive absences.

guidance counselors, and the Project SMART coordinator, and also with assistance from deans, teachers and anyone else in the school community. The entire pool of available students at the four schools is 7,904; of these it was expected that 1,800 would be reached through organized outreach efforts and 540 would receive either mediation services or training.

Outreach. The most significant outreach effort directed at students consisted of seminars, conducted by the project coordinator, designed to help students explore their values and problem-solving skills and introduce them to mediation concepts and non-violent methods of problem solving for resolving conflicts. The seminars consisted of two 40-minute segments of role-playing demonstrations of mediation, slide shows and group exercises. In addition, the students were provided with concrete information about the school's mediation program, what it can do for them, how to refer cases, and what is required for a student to become a Project SMART mediator. These seminars were conducted in lieu of regular classroom periods. As of the end of May, 1989, 2,067 students participated in these seminars.

Outreach seminars directed at deans, assistant principals, teachers and other school staff were also presented at various forums including dean's meetings, A.I.D.P. staff meetings, SPARK* staff meetings and P.T.A. meetings. Table 3 presents the number and kind of outreach seminars conducted at each school. In

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*School Prevention of Addiction Through Rehabilitation and Knowledge is a drug counseling program offered in most New York City high schools.

Table 3

Number and Type of Outreach Seminars Conducted at Each School

Type of Seminar	School				
	Graphic & Comm. Arts	Huma-nities	Washing-ton Irving	Park West	Total
Classroom seminars	26	36	31	26	93
Faculty meetings	4	1	5	0	10
Other staff meetings	yes	8	2	2	>12
Meetings w/ deans and A.P.'s	yes	4	many	1	>5

- All schools exceeded the objective of conducting 25 classroom seminars.

addition, all project coordinators launched a major poster campaign to raise awareness of the program in the school.

Training. An intensive basic training course was offered by V.S.A.'s Mediation Director, V.S.A. consultants and with the assistance of the project coordinator at each school. The course taught students and adults how to structure mediation hearings, fact-finding techniques, note-taking and questioning skills, how to identify and prioritize issues in disputes and how to write mediation agreements. Role-playing exercises were used to help participants analyze their own responses to conflict, to understand and express their own feelings, and to hone the mediation skills and techniques learned in training. Staff expected that 10 students and five adults at each school would complete this course. At two schools (Graphics and Communication Arts and Park West High Schools) nine students successfully completed the training course. At Humanities High School 12 students completed the course, and at Washington Irving High School 12 students completed the course. Thus, overall, the objective of training 40 students in basic mediation was exceeded. At Park West High School no other members of the school community were trained, and at the High School of Graphic and Communication Arts one teacher was trained. At Washington Irving High School five teachers and three guidance counselors completed the course and at Humanities High School a school psychologist, the A.P. for Guidance, the head of security and four guidance counselors completed the course. Thus, 16 adults

received basic mediation training as of May, 1989. This fell short of the objective of training 20 adults. The fact that the programs began later than originally scheduled, and the slower development of enthusiasm among staff than students may account somewhat for the failure to meet the stated objective. More importantly, this program, like many of the others funded by the A.I.D.P. Replication and Demonstration program, was less successful than originally hoped, at stimulating parent participation.

V.S.A. also offered advanced training, focusing on racial and cultural dispute resolution, to a select group of experienced mediators. This training consists of lectures, discussions, role-playing and group exercises to help explore racial and cultural differences and the role that mediation might play in resolving possible conflicts. Participants from all sites attended a joint training session with mediators to have an opportunity to work with peers from diverse backgrounds. Proposal developers expected that 20 students and eight staff members would receive this training. Seven adults (teachers, guidance counselors and administrators) and eighteen students completed the advanced training course.

Trained mediators play varying roles in mediation sessions. Most trained students and staff have either sat in on mediation sessions or co-mediated with the project coordinator, but only five students and no adults actually mediated alone or with another student.

Mediation Sessions. Disputes are generally referred for mediation by deans, assistant principals and guidance counselors, but anyone in the school community can make a referral. One project coordinator said that towards the end of the school year she was getting many students who were referred by other students or were self-referred, and she took this to be an indicator of the program's high profile and good reputation. When a dispute is referred to mediation the project coordinator interviews the disputants to determine whether it is appropriate for mediation, whether the disputants are agreeable to mediation and who the appropriate mediators would be. At that point a mediation session is scheduled.

Each mediation session lasts about 40 minutes, and a dispute is generally settled in the context of one session, although disputes between parents and students frequently require more time. Ninety-seven disputes were mediated by the end of the school year. Overwhelmingly, these disputes comprise conflicts between two or more students. Approximately 36 of the disputes involved violent behavior. Almost all disputes were successfully mediated (i.e., disputants signed written agreements, or in a few cases, endorsed oral agreements).

After each successful mediation, disputants completed a questionnaire concerning their thoughts and feelings about the mediation process. Students overwhelmingly thought that the mediator listened to both sides of the dispute, understood the conflict, acted fairly and made helpful suggestions. They did

not think the mediator took sides and reported that they would come to a mediation session again if they were involved in a different dispute. Some felt they would be better able to handle conflicts in the future as result of mediation.

Administrative Perspective. The success of this program is very much dependent upon a cooperative effort on the part of school administrators. Typically violent disputes are referred to deans or assistant principals, and therefore, their readiness to refer such disputes for mediation determines how widely the program is applied. The overwhelming majority of mediated disputes were referred by deans. Both the philosophy underlying the program and the individual beliefs of the program coordinators is that successful mediation should take the place of suspension. Principals and deans have varying ideas in this regard. Some feel that the punitive nature of suspension renders it the most appropriate response to violent behavior, and others feel that responding to violence with a consistent and unbending policy sends the clearest possible message to students that violence in school is unacceptable and gives the appearance of equitable treatment for all.

While none of the schools have officially altered their suspension policy, all four program coordinators report that the deans and principal have not enacted suspensions in many cases where successful mediation was accomplished. Some administrators are particularly apt to use mediation as an alternative to suspension in cases where the actual events that took place are

unclear or a good student was a disputant.

OREA interviewed the principals of the four high schools participating in this program. Without exception they expressed positive opinions about Project SMART. Most did not view this program as specifically linked to A.I.D.P., but rather felt that it provided a needed service for all students in their schools. They reported that it offered a "humanistic touch," a needed problem-solving approach and opportunities for school leadership. They felt that it sent out a message to students that all rules don't emanate from the administration, but rather that they too had advocates in the system. In general they felt that the school "tone" was improved by the presence of the program. The principal at Humanities High School said that in three cases, the mediation of parent/student disputes turned situations around and clearly kept students in school who would have otherwise left. Most of the principals felt that some deans viewed the program as lenient towards students exhibiting unacceptable behavior.

Each principal was extremely pleased with the program coordinator assigned to his/her school. Each felt that the coordinator implemented the program in a timely fashion, created a high profile for the program, approached the faculty, staff, administrators and students in an appropriate manner, and was highly skilled in conducting mediation. They uniformly expressed interest in continuing or expanding the program.

OUTCOMES

The main outcome measure for evaluating the success of this

program is the number of suspensions using the school's previous year's suspension rate as a base. This measure is problematic for two reasons. First, school records of suspensions do not always specify which suspensions were for fighting. Since this is a conflict resolution program, it should only be expected to effect suspensions resulting from disputes. Suspensions resulting from other deeds such as illicit drug use, vandalism or weapons possession should not be reduced by this program. Second, the program can potentially decrease suspensions in two ways. It could mediate disputes before they escalate to a suspendible offense, or it could be used as an alternative to suspensions. The former depends on students being aware of the program, and being essentially self-referring. The latter depends largely on the willingness of the administrators to permit students who engage in successful mediation to stay in school. In most of the schools the administrators were not willing to go along with this idea, although it was the hope of the program coordinators that they would. Consequently, positive impact of the program in those cases where suspensions occurred, would not be reflected in these data.

Table 4 presents the number of suspensions in each school, during the months of March, April and May for 1988 and 1989. The number of suspensions decreased by 11 percent. These data are of limited value for the reasons stated above and because the program was not in effect for a long enough period of time to impact on suspension rate. Since, the very first mediation

Table 4

Summary of the
Number of Suspensions During 1988 and 1989
by School

School	March		April		May		Total	
	1988[a]	1989	1988	1989	1988	1989	1988	1989
Humanities	14	1	11	2	6	2	31	5
Graphic and Communication Arts	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	8
Park West	0	4	0	2	3	4	3	10
Washington Irving	15	6	9	21	6	7	30	34
Total	29	15	20	25	15	17	64	57

[a]Unable to determine which are due to fighting.

- The number of suspensions decreased by 11 percent.

sessions were not held until February or March, it is unrealistic to expect that the program would impact on suspension rates during the months of March, April and May.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This program appears to have been well-received and is viewed as filling a needed gap by all members of the school community. The program coordinators are highly skilled and professional, and have, in a very short time, won the trust of students, teachers and administrators with whom they have come in contact.

The program has exceeded its goals in reaching and servicing students. This is based both on the number of disputes between students that were successfully mediated, and several indicators of student satisfaction with mediation.

The program has had more limited success in training teachers and mediating disputes in which a teacher is a disputant. Those mediated disputes involving teachers were generally concluded successfully, but it was more difficult for the program coordinators to encourage teachers to bring disputes to mediation. The success seen with the few cases that have thus far been mediated suggests that reaching teachers might be a worthwhile goal for the future.

The program made very few attempts to reach parents. No parents were trained as mediators, and very few parent/student disputes were mediated. The question of whether efforts should be made to reach parents needs to be specifically addressed. If

this is deemed a worthwhile and attainable objective, then outreach efforts directed specifically at partents need to be developed. Otherwise this program objective should be eliminated.

On the basis of OREA's evaluation it is recommended that:

- Questions about whether mediation should serve as an alternative to suspension need to be further explored;
- The impact of the program on suspension should be evaluated during the next year or two since it would be expected to reduce suspensions during that time period;
- Either new strategies for involving parents should be instituted or the objective pertaining to parent participation should be eliminated; and
- Efforts should be made to encourage teachers to utilize mediation for conflict resolution more frequently.

III. ENHANCING BASIC READING SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing Basic Reading Skills, funded by a grant from the A.I.D.P. Replication and Demonstration Program, is offered at Theodore Roosevelt High School. This school serves a population of economically disadvantaged minority youngsters, including a large number of recent arrivals from the Caribbean, South and Central America and Asia. Many of these students exhibit severe deficiencies in reading, and Roosevelt has received special funding for many supplemental programs that infuse more resources into the school curriculum for the purpose of meeting the special needs of these students.

Among the supplemental programs is Enhancing Basic Reading Skills, which was piloted during the P.M. School, and is based on the premise that students with severe reading deficiencies need to spend more time on a reading task than the regular classroom instructional period permits. Enhancing Basic Reading Skills, is housed in the P.M. School, and is the subject of this evaluation.

According to those proposing this program, the students at T. Roosevelt continue to perform poorly and drop out of school at a high rate despite the many enrichments with which they are provided. They claim that in addition to academic deficits, these students are set back by the fact that they are alienated from the culture in which they are living. They argue that the school must provide additional counseling to immigrant students

to enable them to make the transition necessary for them to achieve academic success.

Enhancing Basic Reading Skills was designed to serve ninth and tenth grade students whose reading skills fall in the lowest quartile on standardized reading tests. It provides a special program of reading instruction designed for older students and adults with reading deficiencies (as opposed to young children learning to read for the first time), and enhanced and specialized guidance services designed to serve the special needs of this population.

Criterion referenced testing instruments indicate that severe reading deficiencies cause students to perform poorly across the curriculum. The inability to read leads to low self-esteem and lack of employability skills. Such students come from all grades, but those in the ninth and tenth grade are at especially high risk for dropping out of school, and are therefore targeted by this program.

Program Objectives

The stated objectives of the program were:

- By the conclusion of the project period, June 30, 1989, 50 participating students will demonstrate increased performance in basic reading skills by three to six percent as a result of participating in the P.M. School tutoring program;
- By June of 1989, attendance of 50 participating students will increase by three to five percent;
- By June of 1989, ten teachers will participate in two to three staff development sessions;
- By February of 1989, ten selected teachers will develop/revise course outline and curriculum; and

- By June of 1989, 50 participating students will have participated in one single/five group guidance sessions.

Evaluation Procedure

An OREA evaluator conducted extensive telephone interviews with the Assistant Principal of English and the Assistant Principal of Social Studies, who jointly supervised the program, to determine whether program implementation proceeded as scheduled, and to make plans for the collection of data needed to evaluate the extent to which the program was meeting its objectives. The Assistant Principal of English and guidance counselor compiled reading and attendance data for the program participants. The OREA evaluator met with the program staff at the school site to compile these data. The evaluator also conducted a telephone interview with the school's principal in order to understand how the program fit into the school's overall plan to address the needs of at-risk students, and to obtain his perspective on the program's success.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Program Rationale

According to the principal, a population of students with severely impaired reading skills is best served by a curriculum that teaches reading in every content area. This program emerged from a collaboration between the Assistant Principals for English and Social Studies. It offered an opportunity to bring teachers from a variety of disciplines in contact with a reading specialist, and it encouraged teachers to develop close

relationships with individual students and to focus on their attendance and emotional needs as well as their intellectual development.

The instructional component of this program was based on a program described in Starting Over: A Literacy Program by Joan Knight. Dr. Knight cites data showing that a large percentage of adults who, after exposure to education did not learn to read well, have a decoding problem such that they have difficulty in transposing the visual representation of a word to its auditory or phonic representation. The problem is most apparent and most disruptive to comprehension when the reader encounters multisyllabled words.

Knight asserts that people adapt to this disability by learning to skip words they cannot read (although they might actually know the meaning of these words when they are presented orally) at the expense of good reading comprehension. According to Knight's theory, these adults need to relearn reading with an approach that emphasizes decoding. She points to two methods, the whole-word approach and the sound approach, which can be used. The latter of these is especially designed for students who have a decoding deficiency. Although her program employs both approaches, it emphasizes the sound approach, which teaches the student to examine fully, slowly sequentially and with deliberate repetition, the individual sounds comprising a word. This permits the sounds to be "consciously connected to three of the sensory channels (visual, auditory, tactile) and harnessed

simultaneously to the motor system (kinesthetic)" (Knight, 1986, p. 3). This program is designed to be used by teachers who have no previous training in the method, i.e., they learn as they go along.

The guidance component of the program was designed to address the specific problems of students who must overcome cultural barriers. It focused on multicultural education and employability skills, and the encouragement of parents to provide home environments that are conducive to learning.

The teacher training component focused on special training in reading instruction and curriculum development. It took place throughout the program.

Program Structure and Staffing

The Assistant Principal of English coordinated and monitored program activities and served as the liaison between parents, students and school staff. She was also responsible for assessing student performance levels and attendance to enable evaluation of the extent to which program objectives were met.

The teachers were responsible for delivering the instructional component of the program, and for monitoring and keeping parents informed about student progress. The original proposal specified that ten teachers would staff the program, but three teachers dropped out at the outset.*

The guidance counselor was responsible for providing

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*Of the 10 teachers who originally staffed this program, two dropped out because of illness, and one dropped out because the program involved too much work.

students with multicultural education and employability skills, and for addressing more general social and emotional needs of individual students. With the aid of the family assistant, the counselor also educated parents about how to provide a supportive home environment that enables and facilitates learning, and about available community services. The family assistant also aided the counselor by making contact with parents through phone calls and home visits.

The original proposal indicated that two staff developers would serve the program, but only one staff developer was ultimately hired.* She provided training sessions for teachers, assisted teachers in setting up the curriculum, and assisted in ordering supplies and materials, and in developing teachers' skills to enable them to appropriately administer the reading program.

Program Description

Courses in basic reading skills were conducted under the umbrella of the P.M. School, from 3-5 P.M. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. At the outset of the program, ten teachers taught the courses, and 49 students attended them. Three teachers dropped out of the program during its early phases. According to the Assistant Principal of English, this did not have a detrimental effect on the quality of the program that was delivered, but about five students who had "bonded" to

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*Joan Knight, who developed the reading program upon which this program was based, was the staff developer.

those teachers dropped out of the program.

According to the principal, the model used, in which teachers were responsible for individual students, worked well in that strong relationships developed between students and teachers. One drawback, however, was that it was difficult to get students to attend the program after school. In the words of the principal, an after school program has poor "holding power." The Assistant Principal of English agreed with this assessment. She offered two suggestions: the program should be integrated into the school day; and if the program is conducted in the P.M. school, an afternoon snack should be provided for the students.

In all, 54 two-hour sessions were conducted, and 41 students completed the program. Approximately 20 percent of the students in the program qualified for English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) classes. There were no formal mechanisms for ongoing assessment or for informing parents about student progress.

Individual meetings between students and the counselor occurred on a scheduled and unscheduled (as-needed) basis. The focus of these meetings was on multicultural education, employability skills and career counseling; specific needs of individual students were addressed as well. In addition, the counselor, with aid from the family assistant, offered two workshops for parents, to assist them with their responsibilities as parents, to encourage them to provide home environments that enabled learning, and to educate them about the community services available to them. No parents attended these sessions

despite the fact that a mailing was sent out about each one.

Ten two-hour sessions of special training in reading instruction and curriculum development were conducted. These sessions were also utilized to help teachers select appropriate course materials.

The program culminated with a field trip activity and an incentive awards assembly, each of which was attended by students, parents and teachers. The field trip was to a baseball game in the Bronx. At the assembly, T-shirts were presented to all students who completed the program. The acronym REAL, which stands for "reading enhancement accelerates learning" was imprinted on each shirt.

OUTCOMES

The reading score objective stated that students would demonstrate increased performance in basic reading skills by three to six percent. Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) scores were available from May, 1988, for 27 program participants, and from May, 1989, for 30 program participants. Data for both years were available for 20 of the participants. The 1988 raw scores were converted to percentiles that were comparable to the 1989 norms.* The percentiles were then converted to Normal Curve Equivalents (N.C.E.s). OREA then evaluated the average change in N.C.E.s for students from 1988 to 1989. This indicates where students placed, with respect to national norms, before and after

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*The normative data changed from 1988 to 1989, and therefore the 1988 percentiles must be converted in order to be comparable to those of 1989.

their experience in the reading program.

The mean N.C.E. increased from 9.04 to 16.27, thus exceeding the program objective. Each of the 20 students for whom scores were available for both years, exhibited an improvement in N.C.E. scores from 1988 to 1989.

The attendance objective stated that attendance of participating students would exceed the 1988 schoolwide attendance rate by three to five percent. The attendance rate of the 41 participating students during the program period (2/89-6/89) was 88 percent. The attendance rate over the same period for the school as a whole was 78 percent. Thus, the program objective was exceeded. Attendance data were also available for 38 of the 41 participants during the previous fall semester (9/88-1/89). The rate of attendance during that period was 86 percent. Since attendance is generally higher in the fall than the spring, these data also suggest that the attendance pattern of the program participants improved.

The staff development objective stated that each of ten teachers would participate in two to three staff development sessions. The seven teachers that actually participated in the program participated in ten such sessions. Thus, the program did not meet its objective of having ten participating teachers, but exceeded its objective in terms of the amount of staff development offered.

The fourth objective specified a date by which ten teachers would develop/revise course outlines and curricula. The

Assistant Principal of English stated that the activities for staff development were specified by Knight's training program, and that all exercises occurred on the schedule prescribed in Knight's book.

The guidance objective stated that 50 students would participate in one single guidance session and five group sessions. Dates of individual counseling sessions were provided for 38 students. Six students met with the counselor on only one occasion. On the average, students had four individual meetings with counselors. The guidance counselor led five multi-cultural and employability skills guidance-oriented sessions for each class. Since only 41 students participated in the program, the objective that 50 students participate in a single guidance session was not met. Of the 41 students who did participate, 38 (93 percent) were served in accordance with the guidance objective. Thirty-two (78 percent) were served in a manner that exceeded the guidance objective. The guidance objective, as it pertained to group sessions, was met.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This program served 41 students with reading skills in the lowest quartile. Approximately 20 percent of these students met the criteria for E.S.L. classes. Thus, the program reached those students for whom it was targeted. According to the principal, it was successful in creating a closer relationship between participating teachers and students.

The program was successful in improving students' reading

skills. Since N.C.E. scores represent standing at grade level, an increase that takes place over the course of a year indicates that the student is accelerating at a rate that is higher than wold be expected just by the progression of grade level. It should be noted, however, that despite this improvement, these students are all significantly below grade level in reading skills. A system for keeping students, parents and teachers informed about reading progress on an ongoing basis, should be instituted.

The rationale of the P.M. school includes the idea that significant improvement in reading requires more reading activity than can be accomplished in the confines of the school day. However, given the success of this program in improving reading skills, some assessment should be made of the individual contributions of the actual teaching technique and the enhanced time spent on reading. If the former contributes significantly, then an attempt should be made to integrate the teaching method into the school curriculum where more students could benefit.

The program was also successful in improving attendance. While the program attracted students with high attendance rates (86 percent during the semester before they entered the program), the rate was increased even more once they began participating in the program. This suggests that the model of having teachers view themselves as responsible for the "whole student" is an effective one. Attempts to apply this model more broadly should be made.

The program was also successful in reaching students through

individual and group guidance sessions, since students met individually with a guidance counselor an average of four times over the course of the semester. The actual impact of these sessions was not assessed.

The guidance component that was targeted at educating parents, and harnessing their efforts in the education of their children, was not successful. Although parents were happy to have their children participating in the program, they did not attend the workshops designed for them. The workshops were offered during weekday hours, and this would have made it difficult for working parents to attend. If the program continues, greater efforts should be made at outreach, or at scheduling the workshops during evening hours. Otherwise this component of the program should be eliminated.

The program was extremely successful at providing the staff with opportunities for enrichment in teaching reading skills. The staff spent 20 hours in training sessions with a leading person in the field of remedial reading education.

Although there was no quantitative assessment of the impact of the program on staff, the principal reported that the program was very successful in this regard. He felt that teachers were exposed to a high level of training where they learned important techniques that they could bring back to their classrooms. Moreover, he stated that many of the teachers took the program philosophy very seriously, and "bonded" with students.

On the basis of these conclusions the following

recommendations are suggested:

- The merits of integrating the instructional component of this program into the school day should be investigated;
- Greater efforts should be made, or new approaches should be developed in order to involve parents in the program;
- A more systematic evaluation of ongoing progress in reading skills should be instituted; and
- A snack should be provided during the program.

IV. CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT PROSPECT HEIGHTS: STRATEGIES FOR MEETING STAFF, STUDENT, PARENT AND SCHOOL NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

This program was designed to ameliorate some of the problems that have arisen from the cultural diversity and proverty that characterize much of the student body at Prospect Heights High School. Students from different countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean Islands, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the United States attend Prospect Heights High School. While this diversity enriches the school in many ways, it brings with it the problems of conflict between groups and cultural alienation. Moreover, most of the students are very poor, as measured by the percentage of students' families receiving Aid to Families With Dependent Children. Finally, the need for programs that encourage students to remain in school is reflected by the school's attendance rate, which falls in the mid 70 to low 80 percent range.

The program, which is comprised of three independent components, utilized outside agencies for staff development, leadership training for students and truancy prevention. The staff development component consisted of a mini-course, entitled Common Language of the New York City Classroom, offered to a select group of teachers, by speech, language, E.S.L., reading and bilingual consultants from Brooklyn College. It was intended to address the fact that the students at Prospect Heights High

School, many of whom come from isolated rural areas of small countries, do not have the skills and knowledge needed to negotiate the large and complex New York City school system. It's goal was to provide school staff with skills that would enable them to promote better academic and social adjustment for newly arrived immigrant students.

The second component consisted of a leadership training program, and was offered to selected students who were believed to have "raw potential" to become leaders. The students were trained by a member of the New York University faculty, to serve as peer counselors and role models, and to assist in mediating conflicts. School staff proposed that the program would enlist the help of parents and school staff who could serve as role models, and focus on development of interpersonal and task-oriented skills.

The third component, which consisted of leadership development, was conducted by the Crown Heights Collective, a Community Based Organization (C.B.O.). It provided training that focused on enabling student leaders to obtain jobs and put their leadership skills to work in the community. Much of the efforts of the C.B.O. were directed at truancy prevention.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The evaluation objectives for the staff development component were as follows:

- Selected staff will attend ten two-hour workshops where they will learn, through the presentation of theory and practice, to teach this "common language" of the classroom to their classes;

- A Teacher's Manual will be written and published as a result of the teacher training sessions;

- Students taught through use of the Manual will be tested in September and again in December of 1989, to determine improvement in their academic achievement; and

- At least 60 percent of students taught by this staff will progress into mainstream classes by February, 1990.

The evaluation objectives of the leadership training component were as follows:

- One hundred students will learn to exercise leadership skills in the areas of student government, conflict resolution and role modeling, as measured by questionnaires evaluating the success of the student weekend;

- Ten parents will participate in the training and will serve as role-models for the student leaders;

- There will be an increase in club, student government and school-wide activities in 1989-90;

- There will be a decrease in conflict incidents based on cultural background in 1989-90;

- Questionnaires will be used to evaluate the success of the weekend student leadership conference; and

- Questionnaires will be used to evaluate the success of the incoming student orientation.

The evaluation objectives for the leadership development component were as follows:

- Questionnaires will be administered to 25 leaders to determine if they have experienced attitudinal changes as a result of training and counseling activities; and

- Follow-up on potential and active truants who were counseled will be conducted to determine if their attendance improved.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

This program was comprised of three components: staff

development, which was offered by consultants from Brooklyn College; leadership training, which was offered by faculty at New York University; and leadership development, which constituted a collaborative effort by the Crown Heights Collective and the school staff. The three components were implemented independently except for the fact that participants in the leadership training component were among the participants in leadership development program.

The coordinator of this program became seriously ill and took a one-semester sick leave at the time that this program was scheduled to be implemented. Because each component of the program was headed by an individual other than the coordinator, the program implementation proceeded on or close to schedule. However, the implementation of proposed assessment procedures to measure the effectiveness of the program was seriously compromised by the absence of the coordinator.

Staff Development

The underlying rationale of the staff development component of the program was that, although the students from rural areas in small American countries speak English, their dialect includes both form and content that are influenced by the needs of the cultures from which they arose, and hamper the student operating in a large and complex school system. These language differences make it difficult for the students to learn the skills they are being taught. Specifically, they do not understand certain spatial concepts imparted through language, and have specific

problems with semantics, grammar (e.g., conjunctive relationships) and sound systems, as well as word usage that varies across cultures. Consequently, they misunderstand instructions (e.g., can't fill out forms because instruction states to write name below). The course was intended to sensitize teachers to the specific difficulties of this population of students, and to provide them with skills for correcting them.

Ten two-hour workshops were provided for a selected group of teachers. The workshops were conducted by two members of the Brooklyn College faculty, on a weekly basis, after school from February through May, 1989. The discussions that took place in the workshops focused on identifying specific language difficulties and finding ways to overcome them. The content of the discussions was formalized as a Teaching Manual intended to be distributed to other teachers.

Ten teachers participated in the program initially, and six ultimately completed the program. The Teacher's Manual was an important product of the workshops, and was to be used the following semester (fall, 1989) to train more teachers. Teacher training, through the use of the manual, was delayed one semester, but was accomplished at the start of the spring, 1990 semester. These teachers are currently applying the philosophy of the "Common Language" to a group of students participating in Project OMEGA.

Leadership Training

The leadership training component of the program was based on the idea that, although many of the students have the potential to become leaders, the natural development of this ability is impeded by cultural barriers. The need for skilled leaders in this population is heightened because of the conflicts and other difficulties that arise as a result of the cultural diversity of the population.

The leadership training program consisted of 40 minute meetings, conducted biweekly at Prospect Heights High School from February to May, 1989, and a workshop that took place over a three-day weekend. Sixty-seven students attended the first meeting, and 43 students attended the final weekend workshop. Parents were invited to participate in the program, but none attended. Four teachers, one assistant principal and the principal also participated in the weekend workshop.

The program was designed for situations in which youngsters do not identify positively with the institution of which they are a part. It focuses on developing interpersonal and task-related skills. An instrument designed to identify problems was distributed at the first meeting. Subsequent meetings consisted of discussions organized around structural questions, such as how an organization can change to meet the needs of its constituents, and understanding student problems from a community perspective, and the presentation of a problem-solving model, developed by the New York University faculty member leading the program. At the

weekend, which constituted the final meeting, the students were asked to provide written solutions to the original problems.

Leadership Development

This program component capitalized on the more basic training provided by the Leadership Training component, and focused students' leadership skills on truancy prevention. Twenty-five students, some of whom were concurrently participating in the leadership training program, participated in a course offered by a counselor from the Crown Heights Collective. Of these, ten worked closely with the counselor on truancy prevention activities.

The course, which was offered during the lunch period in offices contiguous with the cafeteria, was organized around the principles of a book entitled How to Be a Leader. The class sessions were informal, and focused on issues such as how students would benefit from going to class, and how one can overcome the temptation to cut classes. Students were required to write a report that described the qualities of a leader.

The major truancy prevention effort put forth by the C.B.O. consisted of hiring a van that drove through the neighborhood surrounding the school, or perusing the neighborhood on foot, to locate students who were out on the street when they were supposed to be in school. The ten students who were most involved in this program frequently participated in the neighborhood searches for students (at times when they were not scheduled to be in class). C.B.O. staff and accompanying students attempted to

convince truant students to return to school (the van would transport them), and negotiated with the school to permit them to enter classes late. The rationale for using students was that, as trained leaders, they would be able to exert influence on their fellow students to encourage them to attend school.

The C.B.O. staff also facilitated special counseling (mostly from already existing services in the school), especially for students who were long-term absentees. Here again, the trained leaders served importantly, as liaisons between the school staff and the staff at the C.B.O. to enhance follow-up of truants, including long-term absentees (L.T.A.s).

The C.B.O. also instituted "Live at Lunch," a program that continues to take place in the cafeteria at lunchtime on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Caribbean music is played, and during the program period, workshops on leadership development were conducted. Peer counseling for truant students was supposed to occur during this program, but never was implemented.

OUTCOMES

Staff Development

Ten teachers attended the training sessions, which were conducted on schedule. A teachers manual was written, and the introduction to the manual was sent to OREA. It identified the target group as students who speak English with a dialect, and the problem addressed by the course as one of poor fit between the language students know and the language used by those teaching them. The goal was to develop a set of teaching

techniques that would facilitate the development of language skills and in that way promote learning in the classroom.

The question of emphasis on oral versus writing skills was discussed. The manual's author asserted that integration with standard English was needed at both the oral and written levels and that oral language needed to precede written language, but that all assignments should work towards a final written product. Another question that was debated was the extent to which learning that is expressed in non-standard forms of English should be reinforced. No clear consensus was reached on this point.

Two approaches were developed. The first focused on helping the student and the instructor to better understand each other's spoken language. The activities outlined in the manual in conjunction with this goal were directed at helping students to follow instructions, ask and respond to questions, understand terms that signal forms of conjunction and relationship, and sequencing of activities. The second approach focused on developing specific knowledge and skills, and included activities that contained content-related academic material and exercises in problem solving, persuasion and debate and oral interpretation of literature.

The use of the manual to teach a group of students in the OMEGA program was delayed until the spring, 1990 semester. The students were not tested prior to the start of the program, and no post-program testing is planned. The program coordinator has

indicated that it will be possible to determine the number of student participants who progress to mainstream, but he pointed out that these students are exposed to many special programs, and this number would not reflect the success of any one specific program.

Leadership Training

Sixty-seven students had some exposure to the program, and 45 completed it. Students completed questionnaires that required them to identify and provide solutions for problems. Four hundred thirty-five problems, falling into 18 categories, were identified. Some of the categories were environmental, educational, teacher-related, student-related and administrative problems. The extent to which students learned leadership skills is unclear from these data. According to the program coordinator, the N.Y.U. faculty member who ran the program measured many outcomes. Because he had a dispute with the administration at N.Y.U. the person who ran this program has been unwilling to cooperate in providing the originally agreed-upon outcome information.

The objective that states that ten parents will participate in the training program was not met. Parents were invited to participate, but none did. According to the principal, parents couldn't participate because they had other young children at home. In order to provide some adult participation four staff members from the Crown Heights Collective and 15 teachers participated at some level.

Before the training program began there was very little interest in student government. Approximately 550 (out of 2,100) students voted in elections, and 15 of the 16 offices in student government were vacant. Since the program has been underway the participation in student government has increased dramatically. All offices are now filled, and there have been many petitions for extracurricular activities.

The objective stating that there will be a decrease in the number of conflict incidents based on differences in cultural background decreased was not evaluated. Prospect Heights High School does have a mediation program through Victim Services Agency, and therefore, the structure for collecting the data exists. The failure to compile these data can probably be attributed to the fact that the program coordinator was out sick.

The success of the student weekend was evaluated by the faculty member at N.Y.U., but these data have not been made available to anyone at Prospect Heights High School or OREA.

Leadership Development

Neither of the objectives of this program component were evaluated. Questionnaires were never constructed to assess attitudinal change, and no systematic follow-up data on truants was compiled.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the extended absence of its coordinator, this program was implemented in that students participated at or close to projected levels, and the proposed services were delivered.

Moreover, some features of the program have endured beyond the funding period.

This proposal was developed by school staff in collaboration with the superintendent's office. OREA was not consulted about the evaluation objectives at that time, and was notified at a late date, about the fact that this program was to be evaluated. In some cases the evaluation objectives were not well-designed, in that they were poor measures of program impact. In other cases, they were impractical, or depended on the collaborating agent or institution. The confluence of poorly designed objectives, late notification about evaluation, and the extended illness of the program coordinator resulted in inadequate data collection to properly evaluate the program's impact.

Where outcome data were available there is indication that the program was successful in meeting its objectives, but in many cases, no outcome data exist. Participation in student government improved dramatically, and based on level of participation, school staff seemed eager to participate in the various components of the program. The C.B.O. was successful in instituting the truancy prevention and Live at Lunch programs, both of which have outlasted the program period. The program was not successful in engaging the participation of parents.

The principal has indicated, through telephone conversations with OREA staff, that he believes the program has been successful. In support of his belief, he points to the facts that the Live at Lunch program is still ongoing, and that there

has been a dramatic improvement in schoolwide attendance coincident with the implementation of the program. During the time period of February to April, 1988, the attendance rate at Prospect Heights High School was 78.7 percent. During the same period in 1989, attendance was 80.7 percent.

The assessment measures proposed to evaluate the extent to which this program met its objectives were, in some cases, overly ambitious. Much of the evaluation depended on questionnaires that had not yet been constructed, or were unfamiliar to and not in the hands of school staff. In the case of the Leadership Training component, when the N.Y.U. faculty member failed to provide the questionnaire results, the school staff had no recourse. In the case of the Leadership Development component, construction of a questionnaire was left in the hands of a counselor at the Crown Heights Collective, who was not trained in the area of test construction. In this case, selection of an already existing scale to assess attitudinal change would have been a more practical alternative.

Finally, some of the program objectives required compilation of data that existed in the school, but were not compiled. These objectives were realistic, and would have appropriately measured the success of the program had the unforseen circumstances of the program coordinator's illness not occurred.

Based on the evaluation of this program OREA makes the following recommendations:

- Program objectives should be more carefully planned, so as to utilize, to the extent possible, already existing and validated measures of program effectiveness;

- All measurement instruments to be used by people outside the school staff should be submitted to the program coordinator before the program begins; and

- Program design should take into consideration the time restraints of parents, and greater efforts should be made to schedule opportunities for parent participation at timed that are compatible with their schedules.

V. ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (E.S.L.) INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

Hispanic parents of students in A.I.D.P. high schools exhibit notably little involvement in the school life of their children. E.S.L. Instruction for Parents, a program situated at Boys and Girls High School, targets this population, and was designed to reverse the conditions that prevent parental participation in the educational process.

This group of parents is comprised of many newly arrived immigrants who must cope with a foreign culture and a foreign language. According to program planners, these parents are frequently unable to monitor their children's progress in school because they cannot communicate effectively with school personnel. Moreover, school systems in the cultures from which these parents emigrated are smaller and less complex. They place fewer responsibilities for education on parents, and encourage parents to take a more passive role in their children's education than is beneficial in the New York City school system. They also offer fewer opportunities for parents to exercise their own rights and those of their children. Planners believed that these parents needed to be educated about their responsibilities and rights in the educational process of their children.

Program planners designed the E.S.L. Instruction for Parents program to offer parents opportunities for self-improvement, and avenues through which they could become more involved in the process of educating their children. It addressed their literacy

needs by offering an instructional E.S.L. component, and it provided workshops, which took the form of informational seminars, to help parents learn about the educational process. The program also offered arts and crafts and dance classes, and field trips, which students could attend with their parents, exposed participants to cultural events and brought children and parents together.

Target Population

The program proposal stated that priority would be given to parents of students with sporadic attendance and/or truancy, poor academic performance, or deficiencies in basic educational skills, and students who are overage for their grade or returning to school after long-term absences. To be eligible for the program the parent must have at least one child participating in the A.I.D.P program at Boys and Girls High School.

Program Objectives

The program objectives were designed by program planners. OREA did not participate in their design. The stated objectives of the program are as follows:

- By the conclusion of the project program, June 30, 1989, a minimum of 75 percent of the parents participating in the program will demonstrate minimum proficiency in the four skill areas of the English language as a result of participating in the literacy component of the program, as measured by comparison of assessment test scores ascertained upon admission to the program, and achievement test scores obtained at program end;

- By the conclusion of the project, June 30, 1989, a minimum of 75 percent of participating parents in the program will attend 80 percent of parenting skills workshops and information seminars. Participants' progress will be measured by a parent attitudinal questionnaire for which the criteria of success will be a movement of at least two points in a LIKERT interval scale; and

- As a result of participating in the special parental outreach activities of the project 75 percent of the parents will participate in at least 50 percent of the P.T.A. meetings thus assuring integration of the target parent population into the general programmatic activities of the school.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Recruitment

Recruitment efforts were directed at parents of E.S.L. students, monolingual students from the Caribbean islands, and others and consisted of two mailings, distribution of fliers, telephone calls and advertisements in local papers. In addition, teachers asked students to encourage their parents to attend the program. Finally, only students whose parents participated in the program were permitted to attend the arts and crafts, and the dance classes offered through the program. Since these classes were appealing to the students, this stipulation served the program well in its initial recruitment efforts. Approximately 25 parents participated in the program. The coordinator stated that, as the program progressed, she realized the importance of ongoing recruitment for the success of the program, despite the fact that she felt retention was generally good.

Program Description

The program comprised four components: reading instruction; arts and crafts and dance workshops; informational seminars; and field trips. The instructional component provided reading instruction at beginning levels for parents who spoke a foreign language, and at the intermediate level for English speaking parents. Twenty sessions, each lasting two hours, were conducted

on weekday evenings.

The arts and crafts and dance workshops were initially conducted on Saturdays; despite the initial enthusiasm of students, this turned out to be an inconvenient time for parents, and consequently they were discontinued.

Information seminars were conducted on weekday evenings. Approximately 11 parents attended each of the four seminars for which attendance sheets were submitted.

Three field trips were provided to bring parents and students together, and offer a shared cultural experience. According to the program coordinator, these were well attended.

OUTCOMES

The reading objective stated that 75 percent of the parents participating in the program would demonstrate minimum proficiency in the four basic skills areas of the English language. Twenty parents participating at the beginning level took both the pre- and post-program tests. All 20 obtained a higher score after completing the course. Sixteen of these scores (80 percent) were above the mastery level. Thus the program met its objective. It should be noted, however, that ten of the 16 parents (63 percent) scored above mastery before starting the program. This makes the goal of 75 percent easier to attain than it would appear if one did not know the pre-test scores. Parents participating at the intermediate level were not tested.

The attendance objective stated that at least 75 percent of

the parents would attend 80 percent of the workshops. Attendance was not taken at the workshops, but poor attendance at the workshops led to them being discontinued. Attendance was recorded instead, for four seminars that took place between May 18 and June 15. Of the 26 program participants, an average of 11 parents (40 percent) attended the four workshops. This falls short of the goal stated in the program objective.

The second part of this objective stated that progress in parenting skills, measured on an attitudinal scale, would improve two points on a LIKERT-type scale. Twenty-four parents rated the program on a five-point scale in response to five questions. The scale was administered at the end of the program only. All responses to all questions were five, the highest point on the scale. This measured satisfaction with the program rather than progress (or change of attitude).

The last objective stated that at least 75 percent of the parents would attend 50 percent of the Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) meetings. There was only one P.T.A. meeting, and it took place on a rainy evening. None of the parents participating in the program attended the meeting. Thus, this program objective was poorly measured, and was not met.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This program stands out for its success in recruiting and maintaining good attendance of parents. According to the project coordinator, two factors were important in the success of maintaining parent interest. First, the parents very much wanted

to learn English. The instructional component was, for them, the most attractive feature of the program. It also drew the best attendance. Second, many of the students wanted to attend the Saturday workshops, but were only able to do so if their parents were program participants. This appears to have aided in the initial recruitment efforts for the program.

The reading objective stated that 75 percent of the participants would demonstrate minimum proficiency in the four skill areas of the English language upon completion of the instructional component of the course. While the program literally met the stated objective, it should be noted that approximately 40 percent of the parents demonstrated mastery in language skills before starting the course. Nonetheless, of the 11 parents who did not meet the proficiency standard initially, 10 demonstrated proficiency after completing the program. Those parents participating at the intermediate level were not assessed in terms of their improvement.

Attendance at the workshops was poor, reportedly because they were held on Saturdays, and they were discontinued for that reason. Attendance at the informational seminars fell short of the program objective, but was substantial, and high compared to parental attendance at other A.I.D.P. Replication and Demonstration programs evaluated in this report.

Attitudinal change was not assessed before or after the program took place. Consequently, it is not possible to determine whether the change in attitude objective was met. The

responses to the questionnaire inquiring about parent satisfaction with the program indicate that every parent was extremely satisfied.

The program did not meet the objective of improving attendance at P.T.A. meetings. This was a poor measure of parental involvement in the education of their children, since only one meeting was held.

On the basis of these findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made:

- Offering opportunities for self-improvement and utilizing student efforts for involving their parents are effective methods of stimulating parent participation and should be continued;
- More valid and more easily implemented methods for assessing program success should be used; and
- Implementation of assessment measures used to evaluate the extent to which the program met its objectives should be more closely supervised.